United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General scheduled to meet today with President of the African National Congress and with leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party, on the eve of Security Council meeting on the situation in South Africa; over thirty speakers scheduled for debate.

+ Security Council yesterday authorized strengthening of peace-keeping force at Sarajevo airport by 1,600 personnel; cost now estimated to be $22.7 million for four months.

+ Chief inspector of Special Commission inspection team in Baghdad tells press of standoff outside Agriculture Ministry; Commission spokesman explains teams's reason for demanding access to building.

+ Failure to invest in preventive approaches to acquired immunodeficiency sydrome (AIDS) pandemic will mean having to take far more difficult, expensive action, Director of World Health Organization's Global Strategy on AIDS told Social and Economic Council yesterday.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was scheduled to meet this afternoon with Nelson Mandela, President of the African National Congress, and Gatsha Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party. The two men, along with several African leaders and South African Government officials, are expected to participate in tomorrow's formal Security Council meeting on the situation in South Africa. A total of 35 speakers have already been scheduled to address the Council.

The meeting has been convened at the request of the member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), who expressed grave concern about the violence targeted at black communities, in particular the June 17 massacre in Boipotang township, in which some 40 people were killed. The OAU members called on the Security Council to examine the issue of violence in South

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Africa and to take appropriate steps to end it and to bring about the resumption of negotiations on a transition to non-racial democracy in that country.

In London today, a joint United Nations/British Anti-Apartheid Movement international hearing on violence in South Africa has just concluded. In a statement following the hearings, the Chairman of the Special Committee Against Apartheid, Ibrahim Gambari (Nigeria), said he would bring supporting evidence and documents presented during the hearings to the President of the Security Council. Ambassador Gambari said he would request that the material be made part of the official documents of the Security Council, "to enrich their understanding of the true dimensions of the problem in South Africa."

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The Security Council last night authorized the Secretary-General to immediately deploy additional elements of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) to ensure the security and functioning of Sarajevo airport and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Council's action followed its consideration of a further report of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on developments relating to a reopening of Sarajevo airport under the auspices of UNPROFOR, in which he recommended that the Force be increased by some 1,600 personnel, at a revised estimated cost of $22.7 million for a four-month period, from mid-June to mid-October 1992.

By unanimously adopting resolution 764 (1992), the Council also called on all parties and others concerned to cooperate fully with UNPROFOR and the international humanitarian agencies to facilitate the evacuation, by air, of cases of special humanitarian concern and to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid to other areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Council called again on all parties concerned to resolve their differences through a negotiated political solution to the problems of the region and, to that end, to cooperate with the renewed efforts of the European Community with the support of the States participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), within the framework of the Conference on Yugoslavia and, in particular, to respond positively to the invitation of the Chairman of the Conference to talks on 15 July.

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The standoff in Baghdad between the United Nations Special Commission inspection team and the Iraqi authorities continued today outside the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, where the inspectors have been denied access since 5 June. At a press briefing at Headquarters today, Major Karen Jansen, a chemical and biological weapons expert and Chief Inspector of the team, said the inspectors were looking for documents relating to Iraq's ballistic missile proscribed programme which they had been told might be in the Ministry building. She also described acts of harassment by demonstrators in Baghdad.

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"One of the demonstrations involved the throwing of food on the vehicles themselves, a number of instances of our rooms being rifled, going through personnel effect in our suitcases.... The team understood that that was going to happen, but at the same time I must say the team felt very, very firm that we were there for the right reason and this was a properly designated site ... and we were going to wait until we had access to carry out the rest of our inspections," she said.

Special Commission spokesman, Tim Trevan, also speaking at the briefing today, emphasized the Commission's belief that the Ministry held large numbers of documents related to Iraq's ballistic missile programme. He said the Commission had had sufficient evidence in the past that Iraq had used "innocuous sounding" places to hide either equipment or documents.

"The Agriculture Ministry itself is not totally unrelated to our activities as a whole either. One of our tasks is to make sure that Iraq does not reacquire weapons that are prohibited to it, and to do that we have to plan for ongoing monitoring of capable and dual-purpose facilities. In the biological weapons sphere this would naturally involve ascertaining sites which are used for activities in the civilian arena but which could be used for illegal purposes."

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Failure to invest in preventive approaches to the acquired immunodeficiency sydrome (AIDS) pandemic would necessitate action that would be far more difficult, expensive and complicated than prevention, Dr. M.H. Merson, Director of the World Health Organization's Global Strategy on AIDS warned yesterday, as the Social and Economic Council coordination segment began its examination of United Nations efforts to combat the disease.

Speakers underlined the urgency of the need to stem its spread, coordination of domestic and international plans, and the cultural and ethical considerations surrounding the disease. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development, Ji Chaouzhu, said that given the insidious spread of HIV/AIDS and its socio-political impact on the already fragile situation in many countries, it was imperative that effective policies and programmes be formulated to mitigate its consequences.

Elizabeth Reid, Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) HIV and Development Programme, said the AIDS pandemic would force the international community to reform the "outrageous disparity" between the significant resources allocated domestically for social programmes and the small per cent of official development assistance which funded the global safety net.

Only the individual could change sexual behaviour, she said, but the individual could change norms and values only when supported by the community.

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